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# CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## Memorandum

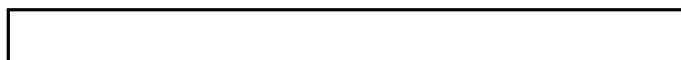


### THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600  
11 July 1966

ARMY review(s) completed.

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
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Approved For Release 2007/02/08 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001000010026-6

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HIGHLIGHTS

The Communists are continuing their propaganda reaction to US air strikes on POL facilities. Peking preaches the Vietnamese on self-reliance and the Soviets have canceled their participation in the annual track meet with the US scheduled later this month in Los Angeles, allegedly because of US "aggression" in Vietnam.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
Search-and-destroy Operation AURORA I has begun in western Long Khanh Province (Para. 1). Operation YORKTOWN, a US search-and-destroy operation in Long Khanh Province, has ended (Para. 2).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
Thich Tam Chau, chairman of the Buddhist Institute, has not agreed to a date for the convention of the plenary congress of the Unified Buddhist Association (Para. 1). July 11 was the deadline for candidates to the September assembly elections to submit their applications; the names of candidates from the provinces are expected in a few days (Para. 2).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:  
There is more evidence that the North Vietnamese 324th Infantry Division has infiltrated into South Vietnam (Paras. 1-3). US pilots in air engagement with MIGs on 11 July again report MIGs used air-to-air missiles (Paras. 4-5).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:

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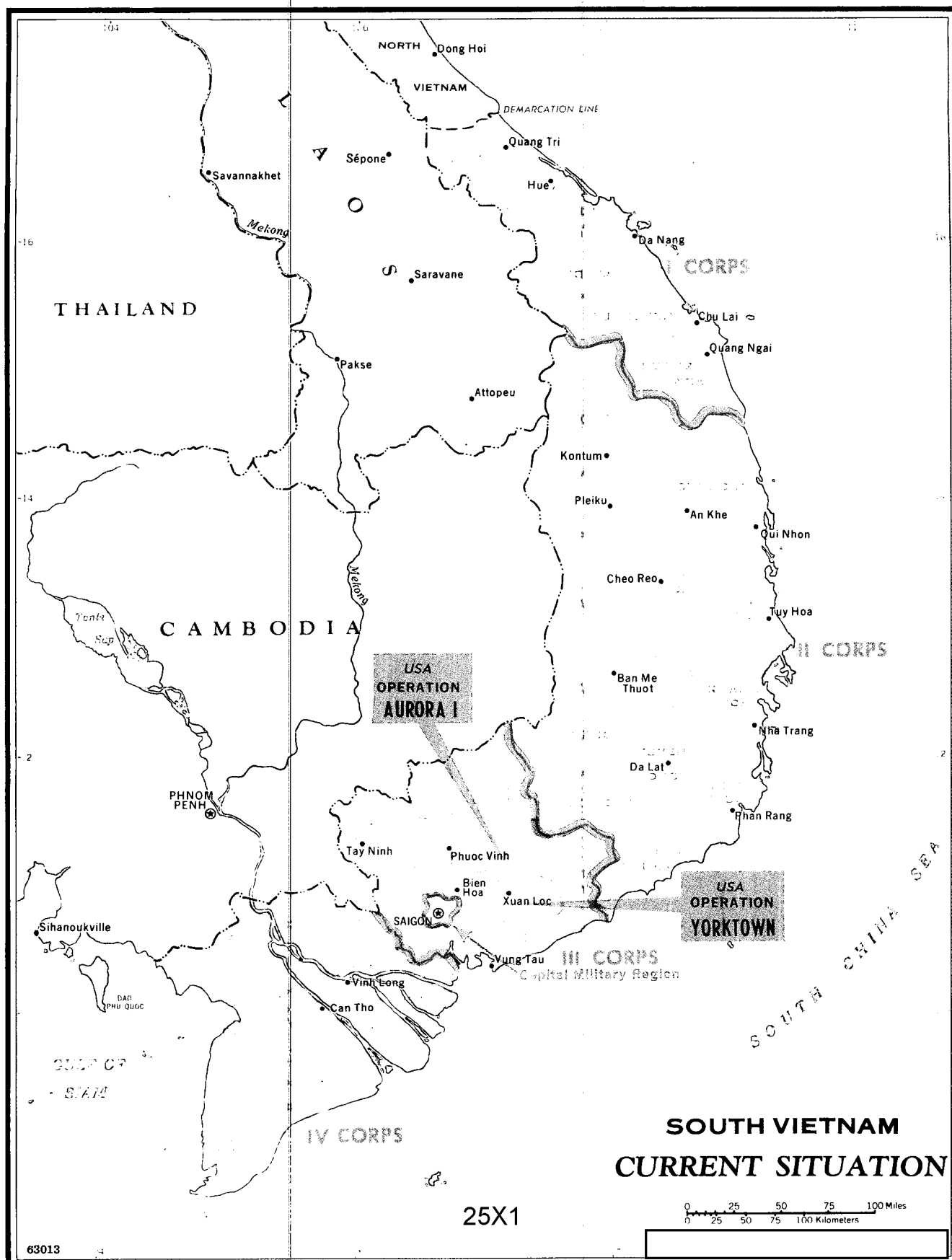
Peking praises Vietnamese for their self-reliance

(Paras. 4-5). Soviets tie sports competition to US policy in Vietnam (Para. 6).

VI. Other Major Aspects: Communists using coolie labor to carry supplies around bombed-out and washed-out sections of major supply routes in Laos (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Two battalions of the US 173rd Airborne Brigade have begun Operation AURORA I in an area about 41 miles northeast of Saigon. This search-and-destroy operation is designed to thwart Viet Cong tax collections in the western portion of Long Khanh Province.

2. Operation YORKTOWN, a search-and-destroy operation conducted by two battalions of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in an area 30 miles east of Saigon in Long Khanh Province, has ended. Final casualty figures reported 19 Americans killed and 54 wounded. A total of 23 Viet Cong were killed and three captured. More than ten tons of rice was captured or destroyed and a quantity of weapons and ammunition were also captured. The operation was supported by a total of 16 tactical air strikes.

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Buddhist Institute Chairman, Thich Tam Chau, apparently is still beset by divisive influences within the institute and by a too-close association with the government. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Tam Chau's work toward a reconciliation with the government has been hindered by the proximity of Tri Quang to other militants in Saigon. In addition the government's publicized support has apparently been a source of embarrassment to Tam Chau. By not agreeing to a date to convene the plenary congress of the Unified Buddhist Association, Tam Chau has in effect postponed it indefinitely.

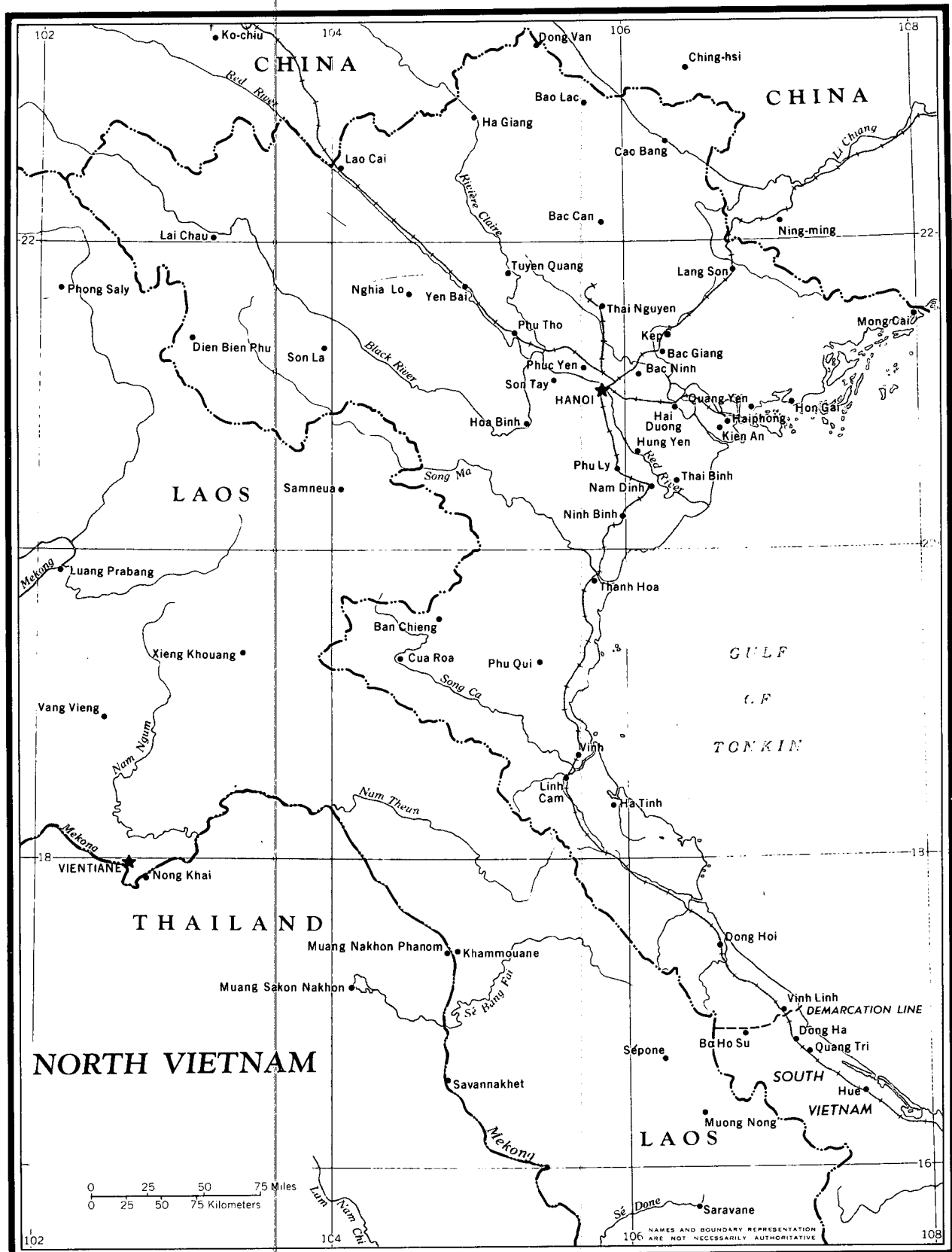
### Constitutional Assembly Elections

2. The deadline for the application of candidates for the September assembly elections is 11 July, and candidate lists will probably begin to arrive from the provinces in the next few days. At least one minority coalition of religious dissidents representing some militant Buddhists and Father Quynh's Catholic following is expected to oppose the elections openly. Tam Chau reportedly told a Buddhist journalist that he intended to support deserving candidates unofficially despite the fact that the Buddhists' official stance opposes official support.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

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2. Reports on the 324th Division have come from several sources. For example, a US adviser with the 2nd ARVN Airborne Battalion reported on 10 July that his unit was in heavy contact with what he estimated were three enemy regiments in Quang Tri Province. On 5 July, a VC captive picked up in the area of this encounter stated that he was a member of the 812th Regiment of the 324th "B" Division and that all three regiments of his division had infiltrated into South Vietnam. He further stated that his unit infiltrated across the Ben Hai River in the Demilitarized Zone. On 9 July, another VC, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] also reported that three regiments and several support units of his division were in Quang Tri Province. Their mission was to conduct large-scale attacks against several towns in Quang Tri Province.

3. Although there is not yet enough information to accept these units in order-of-battle holdings, MACV thinks that the evidence is fairly conclusive that the 324th Division has split--probably along the lines of the 325th Division in 1965. Cadre and men remain in North Vietnam to train and flesh out the organic units of the division, while units specifically formed and trained for their infiltration mission have been dispatched to South Vietnam.

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Air Engagement Over North Vietnam

4. An air engagement occurred during the afternoon of 11 July (Saigon time) in which US airmen reported that air-to-air missiles were employed by North Vietnamese aircraft. No US planes were lost and the use of guided missiles, as distinct from unguided air-to-air rockets, cannot be confirmed at this time. USAF pilots reported a similar incident on 7 July.

5. The US aircraft involved in today's incident was one of four F-105 Thunderchiefs that had just completed a strike against a SAM site 30 miles northwest of Hanoi when it was intercepted at low altitude by two MIGs (type unreported). The US pilot evaded the first MIG only to find a second in firing position 2,000 feet astern. Two air-to-air missiles were reported as leaving a white, cork-screw trail upon release, and straightening out as they neared the target. The F-105 was turning hard left in full afterburner as the missiles passed to its rear.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Chinese Preach Self-Reliance

4. Peking has once again emphasized that the Vietnamese and not the Chinese must carry the primary responsibility for conducting the war in Vietnam. A People's Daily article on 10 July declared that "the people should and can only rely on themselves to make revolution and wage people's war in their own country" and "be prepared to carry on the "struggle" by themselves should all material aid from the outside be cut off." The article went on to hail the Viet Cong who "have badly mauled" the US through "reliance mainly on their own strength."

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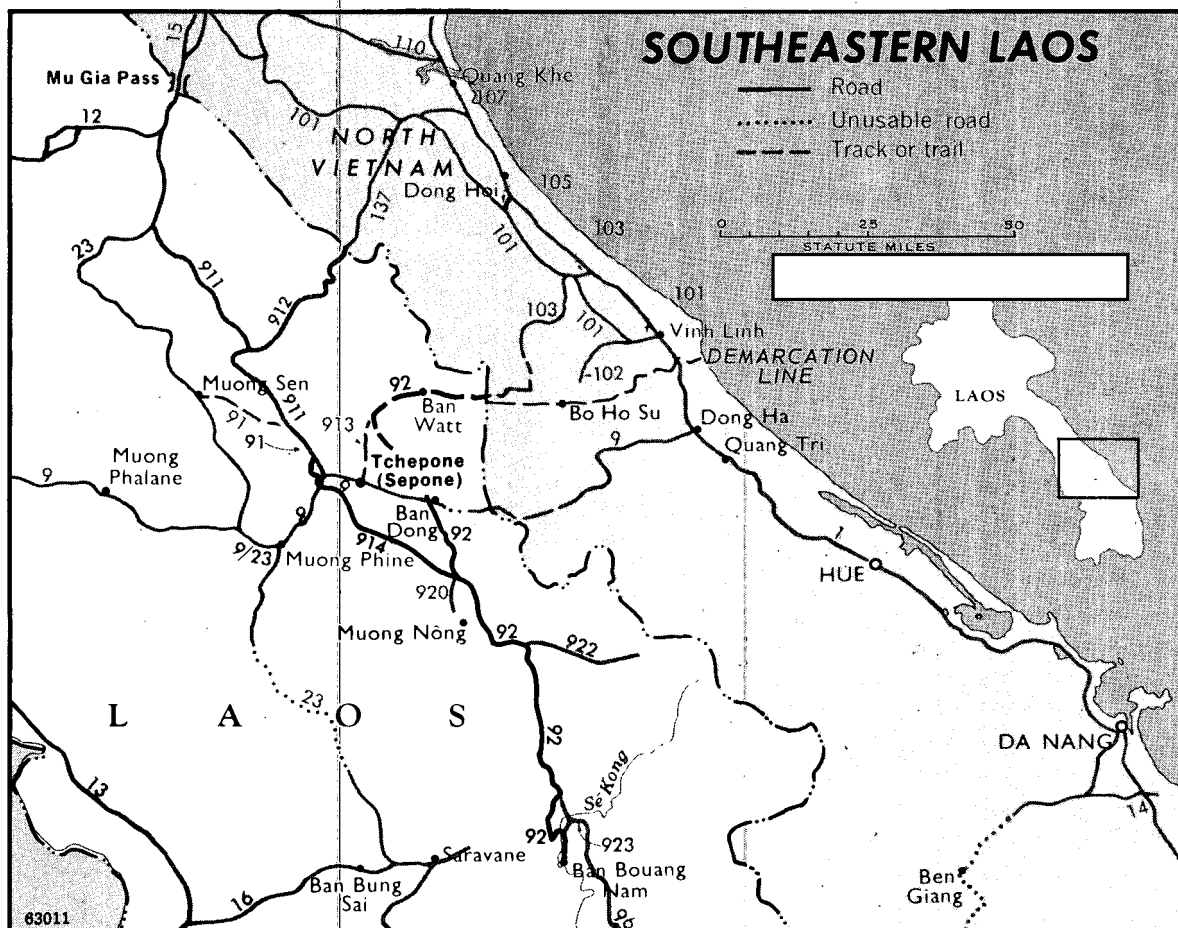
5. Peking's propaganda has long stressed the theme of "self-reliance," coupled with assertions that China had aided "people's revolutionary struggles" as part of its "socialist obligations" and would continue to do so. The appearance of the People's Daily article at this time, however, is further indication that Peking does not view the recent US bombing of petroleum installations near Hanoi and Haiphong as requiring any change in Chinese policy toward the war. The Chinese will, however, undoubtedly continue their present level of support and will probably assist the Vietnamese in developing new and alternative methods for importing and distributing POL supplies.

Soviets Tie Sports Competition to US Policy in Vietnam

6. On 11 July TASS announced that because of US "aggression" in Vietnam, the Soviet track and field team had "refused" to take part in the annual US-USSR meet scheduled for later this month in Los Angeles. The competition began in 1958. The track and field stars were joined by the Soviet basketball team in passing a resolution protesting the war in Vietnam and American military "atrocities" committed there. Moscow's decision reveals its frustration over the necessity, particularly in the face of Chinese propaganda, to display contempt for US policies in Vietnam while at the same time pursuing common political interests with Washington in other important areas.

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## VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. The Communists are managing to move some supplies through Laos despite worsening weather and intense US bombing of the usual main routes. Friendly guerrillas operating along Laotian route 914 in Savannakhet Province reported in mid-June for the first time that Communist forces were portaging supplies around washed-out and bombed-out areas of the route for reloading on trucks. Farther south, trained observers reported on 20 June a convoy of 28 trucks moving toward South Vietnam along route 92 north of Ban Bac. In 1965, observers in the same area reported that the severe weather conditions normal at this time of the year had halted all truck traffic in that area by early June.

2. Recent low-level photography of the main routes south in some areas shows little or no attempt being made to repair road damage caused by the bombing and the rains since the onset of the current rainy season. In some areas, however, trucks appear to be bypassing interdictions. Road repair and maintenance in at least some sections of Laos are more difficult in this season. The Communists may resort more and more to coolie transport to keep the supply lines open.

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